
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DOMESTIC COLLECTION DIVISION

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE
REPORT CLASS

COUNTRY: USSR
SUBJ: SOVIET LABOR CAMPS ON SAKHALIN ISLAND
DOI: 1979
REF:
SOURCE:

TEXT: 1. AS OF 1979, INMATES OF SOVIET CRIMINAL LABOR CAMPS ON SAKHALIN ISLAND WERE WORKING ALONG WITH CIVILIANS ON FIELD EXPEDITIONS WHICH WERE GEODETICAL SURVEYS FOR CARTOGRAPHIC PURPOSES. ONE SUCH PROJECT, REFERRED TO AS "EXPEDITION NUMBER 22," WAS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE MAIN ADMINISTRATION OF GEODESY AND CARTOGRAPHY, USSR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (GUGK).
COMMENT: IT WAS SOURCE'S UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WERE CRIMINAL CAMPS ONLY ON SAKHALIN, WITH NO SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS. THE LATTER WERE INTEGRATED INTO CRIMINAL CAMPS WITH THE RATIONALE THAT COEXISTENCE WITH THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT WOULD RESULT IN ADDITIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL, IF NOT PHYSICAL, HARDSHIP ON THEM.

2. A MAJOR INFLUENCE ON LIFE ON SAKHALIN WAS THE LARGE NORTH KOREAN POPULATION, MOST OF WHOM HAD RESISTED EFFORTS OF DEPORTATION BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES. THOSE INDIVIDUALS HELD NORTH KOREAN PASSPORTS AND GENERALLY LIVED UNDER BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS THAN DID THE SOVIETS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE NORTH KOREANS RAISED VEGETABLES ON PRIVATE PLOTS, FROM WHICH THEY DERIVED A RELATIVELY GOOD INCOME. THEY ALSO OPERATED SMALL

Approved for Release
Date

MAR 1997

24

MSGNO

TRADE BUSINESSES AND OWNED AUTOMOBILES. THAT WAS IN CONTRAST TO MANY OF THE SOVIETS WHO OFTEN WERE IN A STATE OF DRUNKENNESS.

3. THERE WAS A LARGE CRIMINAL ELEMENT AMONG THE NORTH KOREANS AND THOSE CONVICTED OF VARIOUS OFFENSES WERE PLACED IN LABOR CAMPS DISTINCT FROM THE SOVIET CAMPS. ONE CAMP WHICH HELD WHAT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE THE MORE DANGEROUS GROUP OF PRISONERS WAS LOCATED AT THE PORT CITY OF PORONAYSK. ANOTHER CAMP WAS LOCATED ON A SMALL ISLAND (UNSPECIFIED) SEPARATED BY A MARSHY AREA FROM THE ISLAND PROPER. ALMOST EVERY MONTH THERE WERE ATTEMPTED ESCAPES FROM THOSE CAMPS, WHICH WERE WIDELY PUBLICIZED IN THE LOCAL MEDIA. FROM JUNE THROUGH OCTOBER 1979 ALONE THERE WERE REPORTS OF 14 ATTEMPTED ESCAPES BY NORTH KOREAN PRISONERS. COMMENT: SOURCE OBSERVED NO NORTH KOREAN PRISONERS ASSIGNED TO THE FIELD EXPEDITION. FROM HIS PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS WITH LOCAL SOVIET RESIDENTS, SOURCE ASCERTAINED THAT THERE WAS A GOOD DEAL OF ANTAGONISM ON THE PART OF THE SOVIET MILITARY WHO GUARDED THE NORTH KOREAN CAMPS AND, AS A RESULT, IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THOSE PRISONERS WERE SUBJECT TO HARSH TREATMENT.)